

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 VIENTI 08890 070123Z

73

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01

INR-05 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 CU-02 /073 W

----- 114379

P R 061057Z DEC 74V

FM AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

TO CINCPAC PRIORITY

SECSTATE WASHDC 1720

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PHNOM PENH

AMEMBASSY SAIGON

C O N F I D E N T I A L VIENTIANE 8890

CINCPAC FOR AMBASSADOR WHITEHOUSE AND POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LA

SUBJ: OPENING CEREMONY OF JNPC'S SECOND SESSION

1. ON DECEMBER 4 THE JOINT NATIONAL POLITICAL COUNCIL (JNPC) HELD A CEREMONY FOR THE OPENING OF ITS SECOND SESSION AT LUANG PRABANG. PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG PRESIDED, FLANKED ON PODIUM BY PRINCE SOUVANNA PHOUMA AND PRINCE KHAMMAO, KING'S BROTHER AND CHAIRMAN OF KING'S COUNCIL. ALL THREE WERE IN NUMBER ONE DRESS - WHITE JACKET AND SAMPHOTS. PRESENT WERE ALL CHIEFS OF DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS, ALL PATHET LAO MINISTERS AND SECRETARIES OF STATE IN LAOS AT THIS TIME, A NUMBER OF VIENTIANE SIDE CABINET MEMBERS, AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF COUNCIL AND LOCAL DIGNITARIES.

2. BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THE SPEECHES, SOUVANNA HOPPED DOWN FROM PLATFORM WHERE THREE PRINCES SEATED TO SHAKE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 VIENTI 08890 070123Z

HANDS WITH DIPLOMATIC CORPS, REPEATING IN LOUD, VIGOROUS

VOICE THAT HE WANTED TO DISAPPROVE LAST WEEK'S PRESS REPORT THAT HE HAD SUFFERED A "RELAPSE" (VIENTIANE 8769, NOTAL). THE REPORT HAD MANIFESTLY MIFFED HIM.

3. FBIS IS CARRYING THE TEXT OF PRINCE SOUPHANOUVONG'S SPEECH WHICH WAS SUBSTANCE OF CEREMONY. SPEECH IS, FOR SOUPHANOUVONG, RELATIVELY MILD, WITH ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO "IMPERIALIST AGGRESSORS" AND NO DIRECT MENTION OF U.S. OR THAILAND. SPEECH GIVES NO HINT OF ANY LPF DEPARTURES IN POLICY. PASSAGE THAT HAS DRAWN MOST ATTENTION IS SOUPHANOUVONG'S STATEMENT THAT "MOST SALIENT" FEATURE OF CURRENT SITUATION IS "POPULAR STRUGGLE MOVEMENT THAT HAS MOBILIZED PUPILS, STUDENTS, CIVIL SERVANTS AND POLICE, (WHO ARE) DEMANDING JUSTICE, OPPOSING INJUSTICES, SUPPORTING JNPC AND PGNU, AND ASKING THAT PGNU ACCEPT AND IMPLEMENT 18 POINTS AND PRESCRIPTIONS CONCERNING DEMOCRATIC RIGHTS AND FREEDOM OF LAO PEOPLE." THIS PASSAGE IS INTERPRETED BY VIENTIANE SIDE AS CONFIRMATION THAT PATHET LAO ARE BEHIND WAVE OF LABOR DISPUTES AND THE SEVERAL STUDENT STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS THAT HAVE AFFLICTED LAOS OVER LAST FEW MONTHS.

4. ON FOREIGN POLICY, SOUPHANOUVONG TOOK FAVORABLE NOTE OF SUCH RECENT DEVELOPMENTS AS "MOVEMENT FOR LIBERATION OF PALESTINE" AND GOVERNMENTAL CHANGES IN PORTUGAL AND ETHIOPIA. WITH REGARD TO INDOCHINA, HE SAID ONLY THAT THERE WAS ENCOURAGING NEWS OF "STRUGGLE OF SOUTH VIETNAMESE AND KHMER PEOPLES."

5. SOUPHANOUVONG WAS FOLLOWED BY TWO STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES - ONE SPEAKING FOR ALL SCHOOLS OF LUANG PRABANG, THE OTHER FOR ECOLE NORMALE, WHICH WAS SITE OF CEREMONY - WHO IN THEIR BRIEF REMARKS ENDORSED 18 POINTS, DISSOLUTION OF ASSEMBLY, AND WORK OF JNPC GENERALLY. THEIR PARTICIPATION IN CEREMONY RAISED EYEBROWS ON VIENTIANE SIDE AS NOT BEING IN KEEPING WITH OCCASION.

6. THAT AFTERNOON, SOUVANNA PRESIDED OVER CABINET MEETING (EVIDENTLY FIRST EVER TO BE HELD IN LUANG PRABANG) THAT LASTED SOME TWO-AND-A-HALF HOURS. PRINCIPAL SUBJECT WAS INCONCLUSIVE
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 VIENTI 08890 070123Z

DISCUSSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DISSOLUTION. THERE WAS, HOWEVER, AGREEMENT TO HOLD MINISTERIAL MEETING PRESIDED BY KING TO PURSUE MATTER. PRG QUESTION ALSO CAME UP BUT SOUVANNA DEFERRED THE DISCUSSION. WHILE SOUVANNA STAYED FOR THE ENTIRE MEETING, HE WAS APPARENTLY QUITE TIRED AT END.

7. IN EVENING, SOUPHANOUVONG GAVE RECEPTION FOR ALL MEMBERS OF CABINET AND COUNCIL, DIPLOMATIC CORPS AND LOCAL DIGNITARIES.

HIS BRIEF SPEECH OF WELCOME WAS COURTEOUS AND APOLITICAL.
ATMOSPHERE WAS FIENDLY.

8. COMMENT: WHOLE CEREMONY CLEARLY INTENDED TO ENHANCE
STATURE OF COUNCIL AND ITS PRESIDENT, PRINCE SOUPHANOU-
VONG. PRESENCE OF PRINCE KHAMMAO SUPPORTED THIS OVERALL
IMPRESSION. AT OPENING OF FIRST SESSION LAST SPRING.
KING HAD NOT RESPONDED TO INVITATION TO PRESIDE AT
CEREMONY, NOR HAD HE DEIGNED SEND A REPRESENTATIVE.
WHETHER THIS WAS A FACTOR OR NOT, SOUPHANOUVONG OPENED
HIS SPEECH WITH FULSOME EXPRESSION OF ALLEGIANCE AND DEFERENCE
TO HIS MAJESTY.

9. ENHANCEMENT OF COUNCIL'S STATURE WOULD APPEAR CLOSELY
LINKED TO CONTINUING PL PRESSURES TO DISSOLVE ASSEMBLY.
OUR ESTIMATE IS THAT PL ARE PRESSING TO HAVE COUNCIL
ASSUME POWERS OF ASSEMBLY AND THEREBY ESTABLISH SOUPHANOUVONG
LEGALLY AS LEADER OF LEGISLATIVE BODY. IF PL ACHIEVE THIS
OBJECTIVE, AND THE SITUATION IS MOVING IN THIS DIRECTION,
THIS NEW BODY WILL BE UNDER EFFECTIVE DOMINATION OF
SOUPHANOUVONG'S PERSONALITY AND PL WILL THEN BE IN STRONG
POSITION TO DICTATE LAWS OF KINGDOM.

10. LARGE OVERHANGING QUESTION OF THE DAY WAS WHETHER TWO-
WEEK LONG MEETING OF CENTRAL COMMITTEE HAD PRODUCED CHANGE
OF PATHET LAO POLICY LINE. THERE HAD BEEN EXPECTATION HERE
THAT POLICY WOULD HARDEN AND A CERTAIN ANXIETY HAD DEVELOPED
ON VIENTIANE SIDE. AT END OF DAY, ONE MEMBER OF THIS SIDE
COMMENTED PRIVATELY THAT THEY WERE ALL "RELIEVED." INDEED
THERE WAS NO EVIDENCE THROUGHOUT DAY'S EVENTS OF A CHANGE
OF POLICY BUT IT IS TOO EARLY TO JUMP AT CONCLUSIONS; A
COMMUNIST CENTRAL COMMITTEE DOES NOT MEET FOR TWO WEEKS
WITHOUT MAKING DECISIONS. IF AS INDICATED ABOVE PL SUCCEED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 VIENTI 08890 070123Z

IN ESTABLISHING LEGISLATIVE BODY UNDER THEIR INFLUENCE,
THIS MAY BE AS MUCH RESULT AS THEY SEEK AT THIS TIME.
CHAPMAN

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: REFUGEE RELIEF, MEETINGS, CENTRAL LEGISLATURE, SPEECHES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 06 DEC 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974VIENTI08890
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740355-0484
From: VIENTIANE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19741252/aaaabstf.tel
Line Count: 157
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 MAY 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <01 MAY 2002 by elyme>; APPROVED <25 MAR 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: OPENING CEREMONY OF JNPC'S SECOND SESSION
TAGS: PINT, PFOR, LA, JNPC, (SOUPHANOUVONG, PRINCE)
To: CINCPAC STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005